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ORCIANIST.

A Bimonthly Journal Devoted to the Pipe Organ and Reed Organ



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SEPTEMBER, 1900.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

We call particular attention to the original music in this number. The number by Mr. Florio is a fine illustration of that composer's remarkable technical resources and fertility of mind. By the way, his original heading was 'Easy Organ Prelude'—how many of our subscribers will find it so? Mr. Stone's composition is based on a very simple but pleasing motif, and will be found pleasing music.

We are doing our duty—are we not?—and if not, in what particular?—in making this Organ Journal a thoroughly practicable and effective help to organists; are you doing your duty in calling the attention of your organist friends to its merits? It is a duty you owe them and their congregations as well as the Journal, toward whose improvement you thus contribute.

It is very gratifying to receive from our subscribers so many letters of appreciation and commendation. Their kind words help to sweeten labor and make a pleasure and delight of work that might otherwise prove at times irksome and wearying.

Many of the suggestions received are also welcomed, as they indicate to a certain degree the needs and tastes of our patrons, thus affording us the oppor-

tunity to make our efforts in their behalf still more practical and consequently more useful.

Sometimes however, suggestions and requests reach us that are hardly in line with our ideals of what is suitable organ music for a church service. While we realize that good music is always good, we must never the less take into consideration the "fitness of things," and endevour to make such selections as will be in keeping with the place and occasion. If we hear a jolly, melodious tune played by a street band, and take a fancy to its strong rythmic swing, let us not be led into the mistake of thinking it will sound well on the organ if played a little slower. (What a delusion is this change of tempo.)

Again, a love song may captivate us with its tender strain, and we are perhaps beguiled into using it (played with the tremulant) during communion service, without stopping to consider that although the organ does not sing the words, the melody at once suggests them to all who are familiar with the song, and by this means the mind of the worshiper is distracted and led into a secular train of thought.

Many organists entertain the idea that any slow and subdued style of music is appropriate for church service, consequently it is no uncommon experience to hear the "Tower Scene" from "Trovatore" or perhaps an air from "The Bohemian Girl" played for the opening of service or during the collection, and it must be admitted they sound very sweet and pretty. Too sweet and too pretty, because they recall to the mind of the listener memories of the stage instead of the church. Not that the music in itself is bad, but because it is secular in its original association, is reason for avoiding it. The aim and object of an organist should be to play a class of music that will be pleasing to his listeners, and yet of a nature to put them in a meditative and worshipful frame of mind. Gems of the opera, love songs and the popular ballad will not do this, and therefor should be avoided except for wedding or concert oc-

Again, so much good music has been written for the organ which is always in good taste and suitable for the various forms of worship, from the most subdued and solemn to the bright and joyous "song service," that we have no good excuse for introducing the songs of the opera or concert room. To this great storehouse

of legitimate organ music may safely be added, many of the movements from the symphonys and sonatas of the classic composers. These lovely tone poems might well be named "wordless prayers," for they form a golden ladder, upon which the human soul may climb heavenward in accordance with its own secret aspirations and desires for a better and purer life, affording an outward expression for the prayer that oftentimes trembles on the lip and would otherwise remain unspoken.

Another source from which we may safely draw for our church voluntary is the oratorio. Such airs as "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," "He Shall Feed His Flock," and "O Rest in the Lord," are not only beautiful as regards their musical form, but the words themselves are a help and comfort, and will be sure to make an impression for good.

It has been our earnest endeavor to furnish selections of the above character in this journal. Music that would be good from a musical standpoint, and also entirely appropriate for church worship. To this we have added from time to time pieces of a more brilliant style for wedding and concert purposes.

If our friends do not find all their suggestions carried out, they must kindly attribute it to the fact that their requests are not always in accordance with our ideas of what is really suitable and in good taste for church voluntaries.

CHURCH MUSIC IN ENGLAND.

A chiel's amang ye takin' notes, And, faith, he'll prent it.

Mr. Miles Farrow, organist and choirmaster of old St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, has returned to his native heath after having made an extended and observant tour amongst English Cathedrals. Mr. Farrow took intelligent notes of the various impressions he received in listening to cathedral church choirs in the old country. We select the following extracts:—

I visited seventeen of the English cathedrals and heard sixty choral services during my trip, and among all these choirs there is, as may be imagined, a wonderful difference as regards the quality and excellence of the music. One would suppose that in England, the 'home of the boy choir,' there would be some considerable uniformity in training the boy voice, but there is,

to my mind, a deplorable lack of it, and the really satistithereby guarded from making absurd errors when they factory and finished renditions that one naturally is led to look for over the country, are found in comparatively few of the choirs. In some of the cathedrals the men singers are on what is called the 'foundation,' and have grown old in the service, and their voices are no longer either pleasant to listen to or useful, and yet they are retained in the choir. Consequently the music suffers. As regards the boys, there seems to be as much diversity of opinion in the matter of voice production as there is here in our own country, and the merits of 'chest' and 'head' tones are warmly argued and discussed each system having its ardent supporters.

Without doubt the finest choir in England to-day is that at Magdalen College, Oxford. And in the same breath one must also mention St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and Kings College, Cambridge. These three afford the best examples in the world of the possibilities. the beauty, the perfection of vested choirs of men and

Two London church choirs received commendation from our American friend in these words:—

"At Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, where Mr. W. G. Alcock is organist, there is a very large and excellent choir, there being forty boys and fourteen men. The boys sing with 'head' tones entirely, as also at St. Margaret's, Westminster, where Mr. Edwin Lemare is the organist and choirmaster. He is unquestionably the greatest organist in England, possessing a technique that is amazing."

Contrasting the supply of chorister boys in England with that in America, Mr. Farrow concludes his survey with the following observations:—

"The supply of boys' voices in England is apparently inexhaustible, and there are great numbers of solo boys, besides hundreds of boys with fair and useful voices, so that choirmasters are able to pick and choose, whereas in America the supply is small the choir schools are few. Until they are more generally established in this country, it will be an uphill fight for American choirmasters. Many people, especially clergymen and vestries, think that a boy choir is a cheap and inexpensive method of rendering the church service; but let them be undeceived—it is the most expensive form of choir in existence."--Musical Times.

MUSICAL CURIOSITIES.

The musical profession has its own share of the ludicrous. The unexpected, the absurd, the impossible are often jumbled together in laughable fashion by those who possess that dangerous thing—a little knowledge. As Josh Billings remarks, the less it is the more dangerous. Even those in the profession itself are not

leave the beaten track of their own especial branch.

An intrumentalist and composer of note once said that in his opinion the teaching of singing was by no means the delicate and difficult task it was popularly supposed to be; to sing well only two things were necessary; to open the mouth and keep the tongue down. He even had the courage of his convictions, and taught singing in accordance with these exceedingly simple rules. It may be acknowledged that such a method of teaching singing presents some apparent advantages over more complicated systems; it requires no brain work from the pupil, and only a pair of good eyes from the teacher—or, indeed, the latter may be elimated entirely and a mirror take his place, a manifest economy, from the financial standpoint. Still, it must be said that from the point of actual results this method is as yet disappointing; singing teachers need not yet fear to be displaced by mirrors.

The classification of voices oft-times presents difficulties to the uninitiated, which is, perhaps, not surprising, since those in the profession sometimes blunder in this respect, to their own confusion and the hurt of their pupils. A gentleman once unfolded the startling intelligence that his wife possessed a fine baritone voice which he wished to have trained. His idea of voice classification must have been similar to that of the lady, who, on hearing a quartet of women's voices, was greatly puzzled by the second alto. She finally concluded that "it must be a kind of female tenor."

Another on being told by her teacher that the difference in pitch between the voices of men and women was an octave, exclaimed in pleased surprise, "What! so much as that?" A lively imagination can picture the resulting confusion in choral music if it were indeed less—say for instance a fourth or a fifth.

There is a curious propensity to consider high tones as a result or proof of training in singing, when, in point of fact, they are, when they exist, the most spontaneous part of the voice. This propensity is illustrated by the lady who asked another after two years of study. "What are you singing now?" "Just what I was when I went away—contralto," was her reply. "What! nothing but alto!"—in a tone of disgust.

Dealers in music have also their stories to tell. At a music counter a song was inquired for, as the wouldbe purchaser expressed it, "something bright, catchy, and taking." Various songs were brought out, but none suited entirely until she caught sight of "Ora pro Nobis." That, she thought, was just what she wanted.

The clerk demurred, explained that it was a sacred song—a prayer—and not what she had asked for, but with a mind fully conscious of its own resources, she firmly replied, "Never mind; I like the looks of it, and | Fournal.

I think that I can sing it in a catchy manner and make it taking!"

A teacher was once asked by an anxious mother which method of breathing he taught-from the lower or the upper diaphragm. He mildly suggested that so far as he knew, there was but one diaphragm; but was silenced, if not convinced, by her positive declaration that there were two, an upper and a lower—that breathing by the lower diaphragm was all wrong, and that breathing by the upper diaphragm was all right. As proof of the correctness of her theory she instanced the distressing case of a young lady known to her, who had been taught to breathe from the lower diaphragm; as a consequence her waist had become so large as to entirely spoil the fit of her gowns. After such a terrible example there was, of course, nothing to be said in favour of the lower diaphragmatic breathing.

We all know what is meant by singers singing in time—such singers are always to be commended. In "Maud," however, Tennyson makes his dancers dance in tune.

> "All night have the roses heard, The flute, violin, bassoon; All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd To the dancers dancing in tune."

He, no doubt means rhythm or measure by the term 'tune." but its application is a trifle obscure still, it is no more remarkable, perhaps, than his curious orchestra of flute, violin and bassoon. As a poet, he was more intent upon the music of his verse than the technical meaning of the terms used; "bassoon" naturally drew "tune" in its wake, and the triple rhyme is completed with "moon" in the concluding line of the

Charles Lamb, though he confessed that he knew nothing about music, naively asserted, with some pride, that he could always distinguish the thorough bass—it was so superlatively harsh and disagreeable.

Students' examination papers often throw unexpected side lights upon generally accepted opinions. None but a novice would think of comparing two masters so dissimilar as Mozart and Chopin, yet it has been done and in the following terms: "Chopin showed how the sentimental could be brought out. His music is flaming and smooth, while that of Mozart is more laboured and not so spontaneous." The same keen observer with more justice, said that "Mendelssohn wrote many 'songs without the words' which are a great improvement upon the popular songs of the day." This cannot be denied by even the severest critic. If the popular songs of the day more nearly resembled Mendelssohn's, in being without words, they would be, in many cases, none the worse.—Nonconformis' Musical



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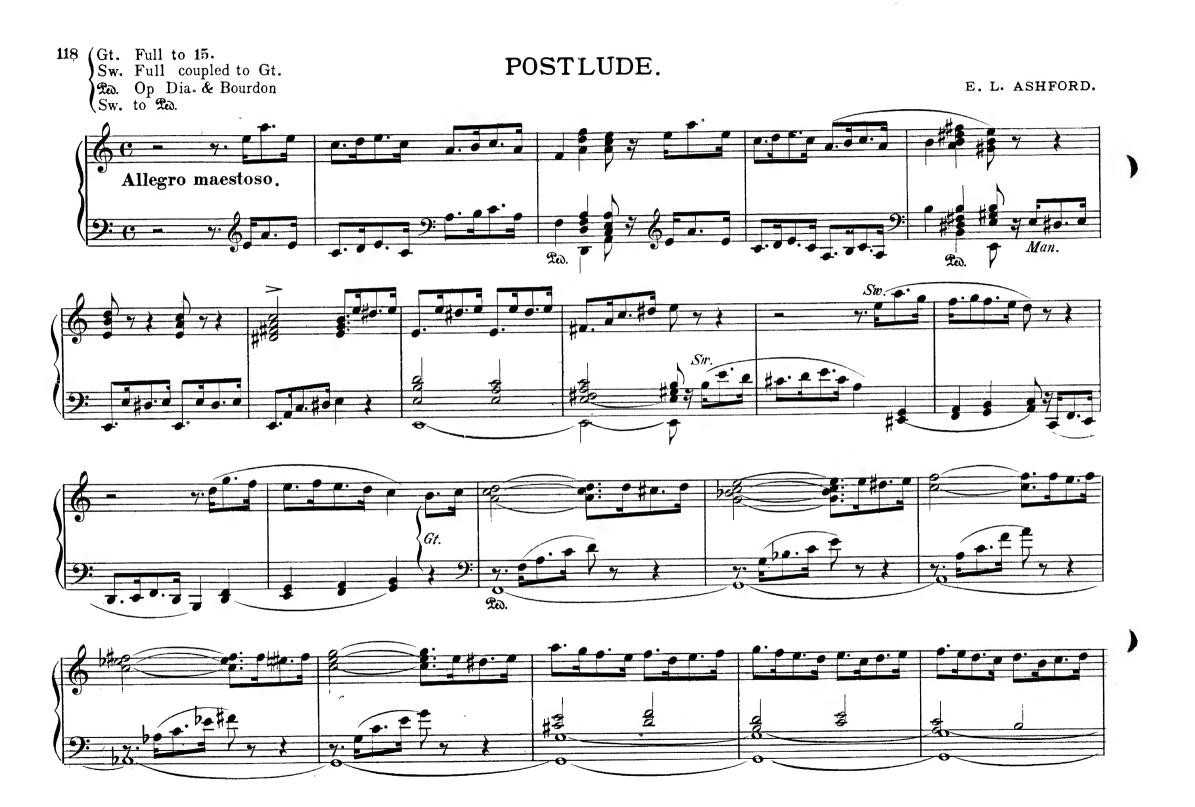
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